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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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1980

Dear Mr. Crane:

I am replying to your letter of October 9, 1980 on behalf of Mr. Gerry Stephens regarding the elections in Jamaica scheduled for October 30.

We share Mr. Stephens' conviction that the people of Jamaica should be able to choose their government by the electoral process. Our policy is one of neutral support for the holding of free and fair elections, with no US attempts to influence the outcome. We have made our position clear to all concerned parties. At the request of the Electoral Advisory Committee, an independent group set up to oversee preparation for the elections, we facilitated the acquisition of equipment needed to prepare the voting lists.

With regard to Mr. Stephens' statement that Prime Minister Manley has diverted US aid money and hurricane relief assistance to his reelection campaign, we have no evidence to support this serious charge. We would appreciate receiving any specific information which Mr. Stephens might have available in order to look into such a serious allegation.

The government owned television station, the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation sells commercial time to the opposition Jamaica Labor Party. It is, however, clearly pro-government in its programing and commentary.

Violence is an unfortunate tradition of Jamaican electoral campaigns. This year a member of Parliament from Prime Minister Manley's party was killed while campaigning, the first time a member of Parliament

The Honorable
Philip M. Crane,
House of Representatives.

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REVIEWED BY CS DATE 25 JUN 1982
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in Jamaica has been a v. of political violence. It is difficult to ascri. o one party or the other responsibility for the violence. Supporters of both parties have been involved either as perpetrators or victims.

I trust that this information will prove useful to you. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to call our Jamaica desk officer, Miss Marsha E. Barnes at (202) 632-6386.

Sincerely,

J. Brian Atwood
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

Enclosure: Correspondence returned.

Drafted:ARA/CAR:MEBarnes
10/27/80

Clearances:ARA/CAR:RHoward
ARA/CHP:RKohn
H:JMcBride

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